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YUKON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

INFRASTRUCTURE

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Yukon
Government

Infrastructure Strategy

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The Yukon's infrastructure – transportation networks, communication systems, energy sources, municipal services, housing, leisure and recreation facilities – are important to economic development.

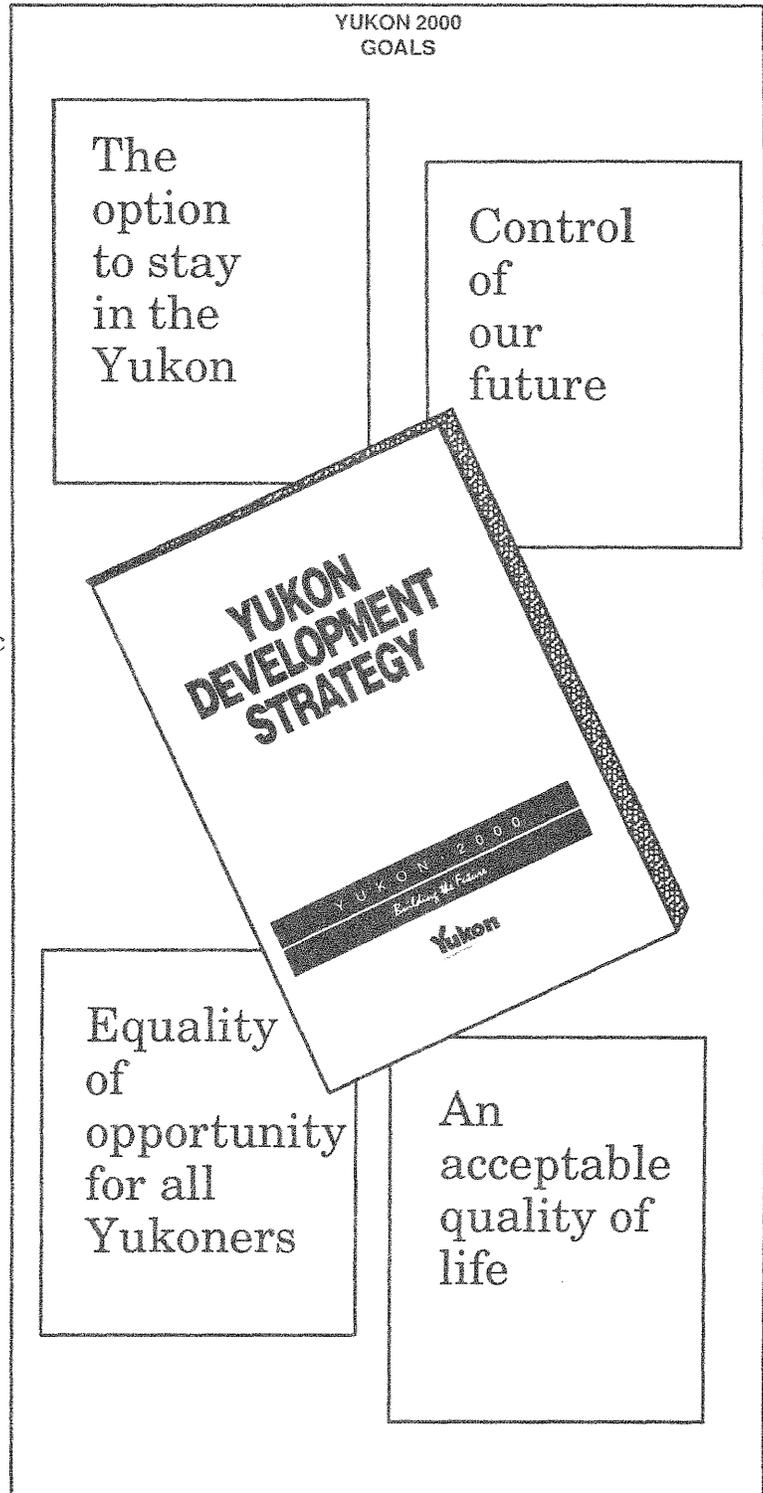
It's hard to imagine Yukoners meeting any of the goals they've set for development without adequate infrastructure to move goods, heat buildings, house people and so on.

In addition, investment in public infrastructure creates jobs and provides income for Yukon residents. It allows development in other sectors to proceed.

This report looks at objectives and directions which may form the basis for development strategies in six areas of infrastructure.

Specific actions are not discussed here. Once there is agreement on the directions and objectives, the basis for evaluating future courses of action will be in place. But discussion on infrastructure strategies is important now because the general ideas here will affect our course of action.

The six areas are treated separately even though some of the objectives and directions are similar for each area.



TRANSPORTATION

In the past, northern development schemes have assumed that the construction of more transportation facilities and corridors was the most effective answer to the problem of development. Experience has often shown otherwise. The narrow focus and emphasis on transportation historically as the engine of economic development obscured other factors which were more significant in limiting economic development than transportation itself.

The recognition of transportation as a tool of development rather than as an end in itself suggests that transportation planning and development can be most useful in the service of other sectors. This is the main focus in the following transportation objectives and directions.

Objectives

1. Integrate management and development of transportation modes within the Yukon.

This will require effective transportation planning and development which accounts for the different needs of air, water, road and rail operations and integrates these systems.

2. Integrate the Yukon's transportation system with those of other jurisdictions.

The Yukon's economy is dependent on imports, exports and tourism so links to other regions and countries are important for development.

3. Assess the costs and benefits of transportation developments to local and regional businesses and residents.

Transportation developments will need to be evaluated against local community needs and private interests.

Environmental and wildlife values, land use plans and competing resource uses will require careful consideration in allocating priority to transportation routes and modes as part of that evaluation.

Directions

1. Recognize transportation as an economic development tool.

Transportation crosses all economic sectors and can serve to support development in each of them with careful consideration of their specific requirements.

2. Adopt an approach to transportation development that considers a range of transportation options.

With a range of choices, local and regional interests can better control development to meet their own needs and minimize environmental impacts through route and carrier alternatives.

3. Allocate priorities in consultation with local and regional interests.

Decisions for new transportation developments in considering local needs and the plans of other governments in the region can optimize cost effectiveness and efficiency, and avoid duplication of effort and service.

4. Rationalize funding, planning and program management.

Devolution of responsibilities from the federal government, particularly for highways and rural airports, will allow elimination of duplicate services that often make planning and development inefficient and expensive.

5. Government has a responsibility to assume an active and lead role in transportation development.

Public funds can be put to good use in building a transportation infrastructure that sustains local economies through capital projects during economic downturns. In addition, they can be used to reduce costs to consumers through better and more cost effective transportation routes and services.

6. Maximize Yukon benefits.

Job creation and on-going support for Yukon residents, entrepreneurs and business services should be central criteria in guiding transportation planning and development.

7. Identify and resolve user conflicts in a fair and open manner.

Conflicts between competing interests are best resolved through an open process which encourages participation of all those affected.

8. Ensure safe, reliable and equitable transportation service for all communities and regions.

Level of service and development will vary according to population size, distribution and extent of commercial development, but uniform standards and guidelines which consider these differences between regions can provide services that are fair and equitable across the Yukon.



ENERGY

Energy has been identified in numerous studies as a major drain on the Yukon economy. Yukon residents and industry spent some \$92 million in 1985 to meet their energy needs, of which an estimated \$74 million or approximately 80 per cent was for imported petroleum products. The extent to which energy costs have inhibited economic development is not detailed, but it is quite obvious that energy costs have a negative influence on growth.

The basic energy issues are whether Yukoners are minimizing energy costs and are utilizing local sources to the most appropriate extent.

Objectives

1. Substitute indigenous energy resources for imported energy forms where it is technically feasible and cost effective to do so.

2. Assess new energy developments considering the direct and indirect economic benefits to local communities through capital expenditures and job creation.

3. Improve the linkage between various energy forms to ensure maximum benefits between cost and supply.

4. Improve the cost effectiveness of existing energy sources by looking at the distribution costs and methods of using energy.

5. Establish an energy policy which provides an equitable distribution of energy costs among Yukon consumers.

6. Provide education, information and incentives to consumers to encourage the efficient use of energy.



Directions

1. Recognize energy as an economic development tool.

Viewing energy development as a development tool is the first step in realizing an energy strategy that reduces inequities in cost for users and builds on their mutual strength, while recognizing their individual needs and limitations.

2. Support indigenous energy development.

The use of indigenous energy sources, where it is cost-effective, offers Yukon consumers security of supply and stability of costs free from dramatic fluctuations in world prices.

3. Reduce high energy costs for Yukon consumers and reduce the outflow of money from the Yukon.

More efficient use of energy and the substitution of indigenous sources for imported energy can reduce the leakage of money and improve job creation, business development, the purchasing power of local consumers and the competitive advantage of local business over outside interests.

4. Achieve an equitable distribution of costs throughout all regions and segments of the population.

Efforts to diversify the economy rely upon an equality of opportunity whereby no region of the territory is placed at a competitive disadvantage through excessive energy costs.

5. Consult with local community and business interests.

New energy developments create jobs and support for small business through investment in capital projects, reduce operating costs through lower energy costs, and have environmental impacts from infrastructure developments. These concerns are best understood and addressed in consultation with those affected.

6. Government should take an active and lead role in energy development.

In consultation with the private sector and community representatives, public funds can be effectively used in the research and development of new energy options.



COMMUNICATIONS

The impact of an integrated communications system cannot be assessed merely in terms of communications technologies or services. Significant social and cultural benefits come from a broadcasting system which delivers programming from across the country and around the world. Also, the communication system enhances the exchange of information within and between small communities. Furthermore, a telecommunications system which contributes to the efficiency and productivity of business will have a positive economic impact.

Objectives

1. Ensure a satisfactory level of broadcasting and telecommunication services for Yukoners throughout the territory.

2. Use emerging communications technology in the most appropriate manner for individuals, businesses and communities in the Yukon.

3. Support and strengthen the Yukon economic environment through increased accessibility and enhanced quality of communications services.

4. Generate new employment opportunities and encourage local economic activity through the continuing development of a communications industry in the Yukon.

5. Use communications as a means to preserve and enhance Indian cultures.

6. Support improved access to fundamental government services, such as education.

7. Organize, maintain and operate an integrated communications network.



Directions

1. Recognize communications as a tool of economic, social and cultural development.

In addition to its own potential as an industry, communications, when viewed as an integrated system of technologies and services, has the capability of contributing to the efficiency and productivity of business and development opportunities in a range of economic sectors.

2. Consult with the communications industry, community and business groups, and individuals interested in communications developments.

3. Ensure access for all Yukon residents to broadcasting and telecommunication services at fair and reasonable rates where such services are technically and economically possible.

All communities should have the opportunity to take advantage of the social and economic benefits that new communications technologies may offer.

4. New developments must be based on a policy that ensures the realistic and cost-effective expenditure of public funds, while recognizing social, cultural and quality of life needs must also be met.

Protection and enhancement of quality of life and local cultures may justify public investments where market factors alone may make such support difficult to justify.

5. Government has an active and lead role in the development and regulation of a communications system that is affordable and accessible to Yukoners.

In assuming a lead role, government is in a position to ensure services and technologies are integrated to best serve all regions and each economic sector.

6. Participate in the federal-provincial-territorial communications policy development process.

Such participation is a vehicle by which federal policy can be sensitive to Yukon concerns over broadcasting and telecommunication. This direction is especially relevant to small remote communities.



MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Municipal infrastructure development is an important area of social and economic life for Yukon residents.

Municipal infrastructure and its development determines the kind of communities Yukoners live in. Further, it affects Yukoners' decisions on where they wish to live, make a home, raise a family, work and play. It affects how long people stay in the territory. The objectives and directions below also reflect the desire for local communities to have a say in their own affairs. Municipal infrastructure is especially relevant in that context.

Objectives

1. Utilize infrastructure development to promote local employment, business development and to enhance quality of life.

Municipal infrastructure development provides the services which make most communities viable. Roads, water supplies, waste disposal, electrical power, communications systems, recreation and educational facilities are basic to the quality of life of most Yukon people.

2. Devolve and decentralize responsibility for municipal services planning, management and delivery to communities as they request it.

3. Establish infrastructure requirements through community based economic and land use plans.

4. Develop the skills, knowledge and resources of community groups, elected officials and administrative personnel to enhance management capability.

5. Maintain and develop community infrastructure according to recognized service levels.

To ensure an acceptable quality of life in Yukon communities, service standards should be consistent both within the Yukon and on a par with those in the provinces.

6. Establish design standards to reflect regional conditions.

To enhance the quality of life in Yukon communities, design standards should be developed that reflect regional conditions and cultural preferences. In this way new capital projects can better reflect regional differences and local preferences.



Directions

1. Upgrade infrastructure in existing communities prior to undertaking new developments leading to the establishment of new communities.

2. Avoid the development of single industry towns.

Recent experience in Faro has demonstrated the fragility of a Yukon community built in response to a single industry boom development.

3. Municipalities should have a lead role in managing infrastructure planning and development. Management of municipal infrastructure is properly the responsibility of the municipalities. There are communities that rely upon the the management support of the

Yukon Government, but, in the first instance, local people have the responsibility for deciding what level and type of services they desire, and what kind of facilities they wish to construct.

4. Support local human resources development.

In assuming increased local responsibilities, many communities face an increased burden for a small population of people.

5. Establish community-based economic and land use plans.

To exercise better local control, especially in response to large external developments, community planning exercises offer a means for local people to set their own social and economic agendas.

6. Consult with the private sector.

On-going discussions with private business and bands will ensure that business and employment opportunities and spin-off benefits are maximized.

7. Provide Yukon communities with the necessities for a safe, healthy and comfortable life comparable with other parts of Canada.

Maintaining comparable services is essential if residents are to stay in their communities as well as in the Yukon.

8. Maximize local employment and local materials.

Public funds can be most beneficial to local economies if careful consideration is given to how the maximum benefits to local residents, workers and businesses can be achieved.



HOUSING

Shelter is an essential element for any society because it supports all other aspects of health, education and general welfare. In the cold climate of the Yukon and other parts of the North, quality housing is even more critical to human existence.

Furthermore, a housing program can

contribute to an overall development strategy in important ways. In addition to the direct jobs and economic activities from the construction of housing, important indirect and long term benefits for other sectors of the economy can also result. The forestry, manufacturing and service sectors would benefit the most from stable residential construction.



Objectives



1. Provide access for all Yukon residents to good quality, appropriate and affordable housing.

2. Devolve and decentralize responsibility for administration and delivery of housing programs.

3. Support the training of resident Yukoners in the building trades and in housing administration.

4. Adopt a housing policy to better integrate management of private and public housing developments in response to identified housing needs.

Without a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities for the private and public sector in meeting housing needs, the delivery of new housing will be inefficient and inadequate.

5. Utilize housing development to promote local employment and business development, and enhance the quality of life.

The purchase of a house, especially a newly constructed house, has positive impacts on the economy and on the local community.

6. Establish alternate financing arrangements.

The creation of alternate financing arrangements, particularly for rural communities, would encourage more individuals to assume responsibility for home ownership and promote stability of residency in the Yukon.



Directions

1. Encourage self-sufficiency.

With communities, bands, co-operatives, families and individuals taking primary responsibility for the provision and maintenance of shelter, reliance on outside forces will be reduced and local control enhanced.

2. Assistance for households to obtain adequate housing.

When individuals and families cannot obtain adequate and appropriate housing at an affordable price, government assistance may be required.

3. Support for community planning.

There needs to be a process whereby community needs and desires are considered if housing is to play a positive role in the social and economic development of the community.

4. Address housing needs.

A significant number of Yukoners need better housing. Policies and programs which assist these households should be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to improve quality of life for those people.

5. Encourage local control of housing developments.

6. Encourage energy conservation in home renovation and construction where it is cost-effective to do so.

With energy as a major component of shelter costs, there are often sound economic reasons for adopting energy conservation measures to make housing more affordable.

7. Maximize local and Yukon economic benefits.

Housing programs can provide a strong stimulus to local economies through the use of local labour and local materials.



LEISURE AND RECREATION

Recreation and leisure activities have only rarely been considered economic tools. Seen as pastime diversions from work, their economic significance has frequently been overlooked.

For Yukon people, recreation and leisure facilities and programs offer three essential benefits to Yukon economic life: 1.) they stabilize Yukon communities by making them attractive places to live and locate, 2.) they create employment opportunities in the service and construction industries, and 3.) they create strength in a Yukon cultural identity.

Objectives

1. Integrate recreation and leisure planning into community and territorial economic development strategies at the community and territorial levels.

2. Enhance local control of recreation and leisure activities through increased emphasis on human resource development.

3. Encourage the participation of all Yukoners in recreation and leisure activities, especially with respect to cross-cultural development.

Directions

1. Enhance the quality of life for Yukoners. Recreation serves to meet the physical, social and psychological needs of a community.

2. Encourage the definition and development of Yukon identity through recreational and cultural activities.

Recreation contributes to the preservation and enhancement of the Yukon's cultural past and present. Recreation gives expression to the identity of the Yukon community as it is understood by residents and recognized by visitors. It is an important element of the

cultural fabric that holds residents and attracts tourists.

3. Encourage local control to ensure development of a supportive infrastructure that maximizes local social and economic benefits.

To further their skills and enjoyment in recreation and leisure activities, communities require recreational infrastructure and, most importantly, recreation professionals and community control of recreation planning.

4. Equality of opportunity.

All regions and all people of the Yukon are entitled to equal opportunity to participate in

and benefit from recreation and leisure activities.



Conclusion

In the years to come many decisions will have to be made on how and where to improve infrastructure. These decisions are important. The cost of putting in public services alone underscores that. But with agreement on these objectives and directions, the choices should be easier.